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March 5, 2008

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PARRI O. BLACK

The Honorable Richard Lugar
State of Indiana
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Sen. Lugar:

On behalf of Youth First, Inc., please accept this letter and accompanying proposal in response to your office's questionnaires for federally designated funds to help thousands of children and families in Southwest Indiana.

Youth First's mission is to reduce substance abuse by providing research proven prevention and early intervention programs for youth and families. In Evansville and the surrounding counties, we are developing a comprehensive, collaborative, community-wide model focused on reducing risks and building resiliency in kids and families. In the process, Youth First has become our region's primary leader and resource for best practices in prevention, but we have barely scratched the surface.

Our goal is to make proven prevention programs available to all youth, families, schools, churches, and communities in Southwestern Indiana and perhaps beyond. Site-based services, like Youth First's School Social Workers, are helping kids, supporting families, and saving lives everyday.

Take Adam, for instance: an Evansville high school student who was depressed, using drugs, and suicidal until he was referred to a Youth First Social Worker. Her intervention helped him get on the road to recovery, and now Adam and his parents are extremely grateful. He graduated from high school, received a college scholarship, and decided to enlist in the Navy. Now Adam has a great future to look forward to thanks to Youth First.

Amber is another story. She was in and out of juvenile detention, using drugs, failing school, and pregnant when she was introduced to Reconnecting Youth, one of Youth First's proven programs. The semester-long course taught by a Youth First Social Worker turned her life around. She stood before the Youth First Board of Directors and shared that she is now staying sober and out of trouble, making

good grades, preparing to graduate, and planning to go to college so she can make a better life for her child. What a powerful transformation!

During the last school year, Youth First provided over 154 research-based prevention and early intervention programs reaching over 30,000 youth, parents, and caregivers. We evaluate all of our programs, with the help of an independent evaluator, and we are pleased to report that Youth First programs are reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors for youth and families. In fact, Youth First is a key contributor to helping our community:

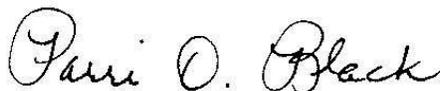
- *Close the Achievement Gap in Schools*
- *Increase Graduation Rates*
- *Reduce the Crime Rate*
- *Save Tax Dollars*
- *Contain Health Care Costs*
- *Build a Stronger Workforce*
- *Raise Healthier Citizens*

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, when just one child is turned away from a lifetime of substance abuse, criminal behavior, and dropping out of school, the community saves more than \$2,000,000.

Youth First is committed to making sure the results last for a lifetime, but we need continued support to accomplish our goals. Currently, our work is supported by contracts with the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation tied to two large federal grants which will conclude by May 2009, and we also receive private support from the Welborn Baptist Foundation, other foundations, businesses, and individuals. Our intent, with your assistance and support, is to sustain, refine, and grow our efforts to make the results last well into the future.

We hope you will help us find ways to fund and continue our work, not only in the Evansville area but perhaps beyond. With your help and guidance, we believe Youth First can be a model for other communities, the state, and the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Parri O. Black". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Parri O. Black
President & CEO